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AN ADDRESS

BY

HENRY BERGH, ESQ.

President of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty
to Animals,

DELIVERED IN THE GREAT HALL

OF THE

PUTNAM COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY;

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LATE

FAIR,

Held at Carmel, on the 19th of September,

1867.

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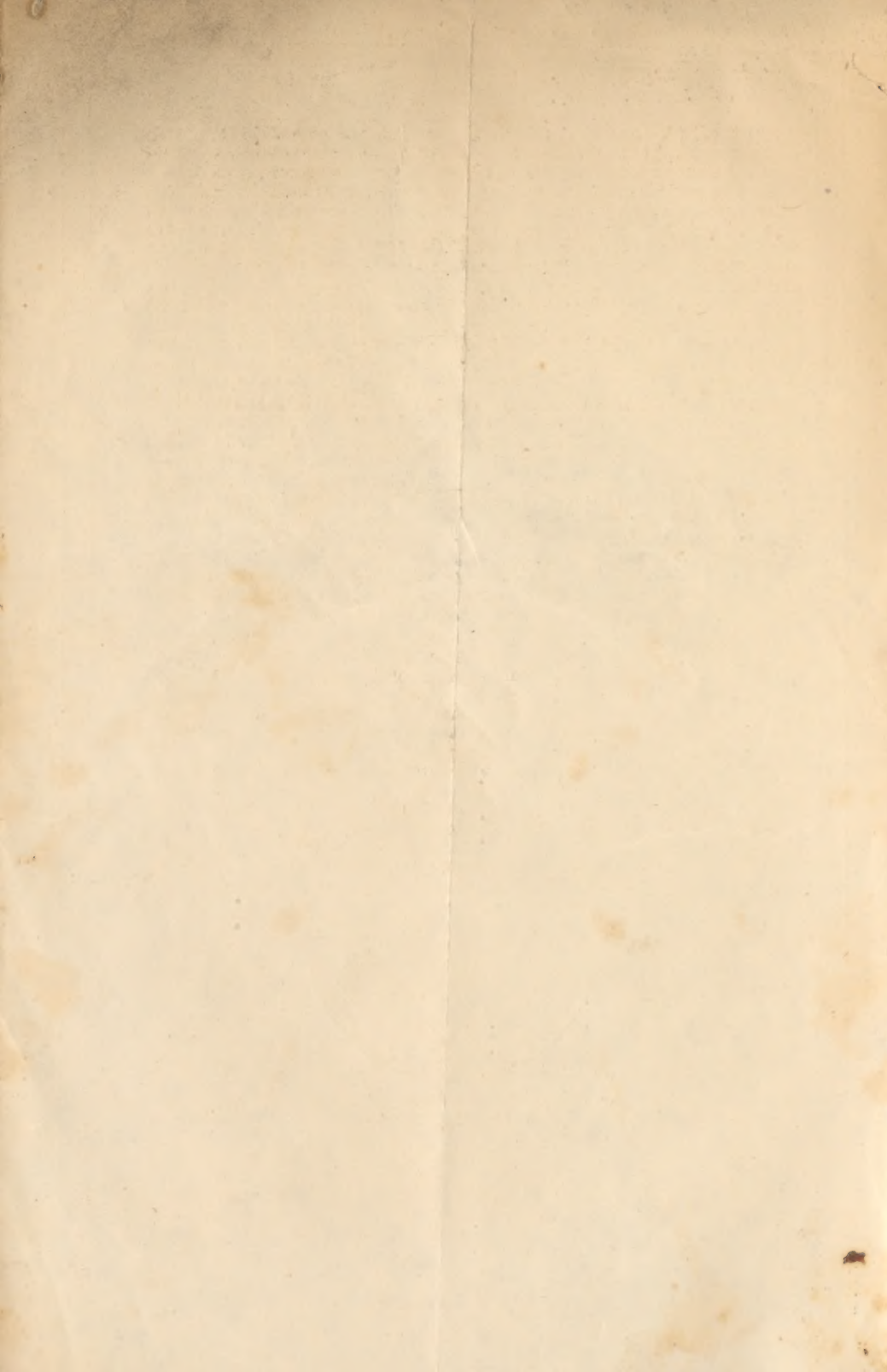


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GENTLEMEN: It is an undeniable fact, which each one of you no doubt recognizes, that domestic animals are the indispensable population of the farm, and form its principal riches. Without these creatures, Agriculture is no longer possible. It follows, therefore, that it is the duty, and policy of Agricultural Societies, to impress upon the minds of cultivators of the soil, the necessity of employing the best means in their power, for the improvement of their stock, their care, and their humane and intelligent utilization. Every living creature has assigned to it a limit of endurance and power, and whoever attempts to exceed it, commits a blunder and a sin, which is certain to avenge itself, at a cost vastly disproportionate to the advantage contemplated.

There is a perfectly natural accord between this admirable Society of yours, gentlemen, and the one which I have the honor to represent. You seek to make the world profit by the labor of the toiling animal; we, to protect and preserve its powers, from that cruel deterioration consequent on unreasonable treatment. We, therefore, should be—as I trust we are—the best of friends.

That agriculture may reap the full benefit of the labor of the brute creation, it is essential to estimate carefully the distance to be traveled, the weight to be carried, and the number of hours in the day, and the days in the week, to which their strength may be profitably applied. There is a universal law, affecting the material interests of living and inanimate things, and that is—ECONOMY. Transgress this law in any of its relations to this world's affairs, and it speedily avenges itself; by wasted physical power, deterioration of the elements of production, sterility and death. Agriculture prospers quite as much by the law of repose as by the law of labor.

Your farms, gentlemen, as you are aware, require nourishment and rest quite as regularly—if at greater intervals—as do your teams of horses and oxen. Subject these latter to twenty hours of labor daily, and it requires but a short time to satisfy you of its unprofitableness, if not immorality. It is a stupid delusion to suppose that any of the laws of the Creator of all things, can be subverted or disobeyed by mankind with impunity.

You may overwork, overload, or overdrive your patient and submissive animal, but you abstract so much wealth from your possession by so doing. The laws of vital economy are aptly illustrated by a little story which I remember to have read somewhere, in substance as follows: A youth and an old man start off together on a long journey, the former mounted on a jet black fiery

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charger, the latter on a quiet, undemonstrative gray nag. At the start, the black steed was soon out of sight, and ere a quarter of the journey was performed by the steady old gray, already had the youth put one-half the road behind him. Thus they journeyed on, until at length the old man, on looking up, thought he discerned in the distance a dark moving spot, which suggested to his mind the possibility of his young friend having met with some accident, and had been compelled to moderate his speed. As he progressed, the dark speck became more and more distinct, until at last it assumed the form and aspect of a horse and rider, which soon thereafter resolved itself into what had been at the start his dashing companion; but, alas! how changed! Where were now the freshness, vigor, and impatient confidence which characterized the onset—where the spirit, elegance, and proud assurance of the start? Gone! all gone! and in their stead, pallor, exhaustion, and dismay! And so, they reached the appointed goal at the *same instant of time*; the black steed and its rider broken, strained and weary; and the old man and his plodding servant, tired, it is true, but ready for a future journey.

I am admonished, by the brevity of time allotted me to address you to-day, that if I would present to you, even the most rapid enumeration only, of the pecuniary interests affected by a disregard of the rights of the lower animals, I must exercise dispatch.

So interwoven with, and dependent on the brute creation, is the prosperity and even life of mankind, that often the meanest insect and bird stands sentinel over their property. It would astonish and confound an individual, addicted to the wanton destruction of little birds, for example, to learn the value to agriculture of these seemingly insignificant creatures. Permit me to cite an example of the inappreciable utility of only one of them, the martin, a species of sparrow. From the 15th of April to the 29th of August, eighteen of these birds were once killed, in the stomachs of which were discovered not less than 8,690 insects, destructive to the produce of the farm: which gives for each day and bird, a total of 483 insects destroyed.

Even though the senseless butchery of these feathered friends of man, were done under the pretence of supplying food for the table; imagine, if you can, how many bushels of wheat, or barrels of wine, or bales of cotton, are represented in each of these little victims!

It may be truthfully said, that Lucullus, in all his glory, never made such a costly repast; and to find a parallel to such luxury, it is necessary to cite the famous pearl-feast of Cleopatra! Nor is this war of extermination carried on alone by men; but children, of that age, as La Fontaine says, "which is without pity," take part in this wanton savagery, by destroying the nests and killing the helpless young of these unpaid servants of the tillers of the soil.

Let us see what we protect when we defend the brute creation. Take only four species of animals for example. In 1860 there were in the United States—

9,000,000 of Horses and Mules.	24,000,000 of Sheep.
29,000,000 of Neat Cattle.	37,000,000 of Swine.

Their aggregate value was \$1,000,000,000, having doubled in ten years. One-tenth of this sum was owned in the State of New York. Their *annual* revenue, calculating 12,000,000 working horses, mules, and yokes of oxen, at 50 cents per day for 300 working days only, is one billion, eight hundred millions of dollars per annum! To this must be added their flesh and other products of their bodies, making a total revenue of over \$2,000,000,000, almost as much as our national debt! That from *fowl* is proportionately great. This is the mere mercenary point of view; the moral is even more remarkable.

* * * * *

In casting our eyes over the numerous catalogue of human crimes and frailties; over the list of those who have perished on the scaffold, or died

some other death of violence—the result of blasted character and the world's scorn—it is useful and interesting to know, if the germs of their turpitude were perceptible in the days of their youthful innocence; whether the cold-blooded murderer of after-life, gave evidences of his future ferocity, by the torture of dumb, unoffending brute creatures.

The tyrant Domitian, while yet an infant, history informs us, foreshadowed that diabolical character which subsequently terrified the world, in his love of cruelty to flies and other insects, by tearing off their wings and legs.

A royal child, afterwards Louis XIII. of France, once crushed beneath the heel of his boot a little sparrow, which had taken refuge in his bosom: seeing which, the good king, his father, Henry IV., exclaimed to his queen: "Wife, I pray that I may outlive that son, else he will be sure to maltreat his mother;" and the prediction was verified: for we know that Marie Medicis died at Cologne at 68 years of age, exiled and reduced to the greatest extremes of misery by her son. Henry IV. proved a prophet. Moreover, at the siege of Montauban, this same cruel child, now become a monarch and a man, heartlessly stood by and mimicked the dying contortions of his Protestant prisoners.

Hogarth, you may remember, in his "Four Phases of Cruelty," makes the child that is represented as torturing a dog in the first picture, terminate his career by a murder in the last.

* * * * *

To owners of horses, cattle, and other animals, I would respectfully offer a suggestion or two, namely: to physic their creatures as little as possible; and leave to nature to doctor her own disorders. Physic, oftener kills, than cures.

Shoeing is another matter worthy of their serious consideration. I have owned horses, a large portion of my life; and make it an invariable rule, to instruct blacksmiths not to remove any more of the hoof, *than is required to level the shoe*; and, even this should be done with a *rasp*, only. My advice to all persons, desirous of having their animals possess sound feet, and be free from lameness, is, never to send them to be shod, at a shop where the barbarous instrument called a *Buteris* is in use.

The hoofs of an animal are to it, what the foundations are to a house: remove them, and both alike fall.

A very worthy gentleman, keeping a hotel at the Lake of Mahopac, told me, the other day, that the cruel practice of tying the legs of sheep and calves, whereby circulation is suspended, swellings near the ligatures, and the secretion of fetid mucus, were occasioned, which soon extends up toward the body, poisoning the flesh, and rendering it necessary, in his experience, to cut off and throw away a large quantity of the animal! It is horrible to contemplate the probability of our having such *food* served up to us to eat.

The prevailing mode of transporting your cattle and smaller animals to market, and their subsequent mode of slaughter, is not only barbarous in the extreme, but is known to be pernicious to the flesh destined for human food.

Before the creation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the most revolting spectacles were daily exhibited in the streets of New York, of sheep and calves tightly bound by the legs and piled on top of one another, with as little regard to their sufferings as if they had been so many stones. Those horrors, I am happy to say, no longer shock the sensibilities of the kind-hearted of that metropolis; although, I am pained to add, that the cruel practice is here conspicuous.

A careful analysis has been made of the blood of animals thus treated, and it has been ascertained by frequent trials, that if it be given to hogs, it will kill them!

In a spirit of mercy and compassion, I have, on several occasions, taken the liberty of remonstrating with persons passing by my house at Mahopac, and have implored them to use crates in their transportation, thereby allowing

the poor wretches to stand while on their way to the shambles, to offer up their lives for the profit and nourishment of mankind. But, I am sorry to say, my respectful and humane appeals have, thus far, with few gratifying exceptions, been wholly disregarded!

I shall, however, persist in my merciful entreaties, encouraged by our success in the great city of New York; and in the firm belief that the American farmer, after due reflection, will not be behind his fellow-countrymen of the Empire City in the practice of humanity.

The working of horses with large running sores beneath their collars, or other portions of the harness, manifests a cruel indifference to the sufferings of those patient slaves; and it must require a hard heart to daily inflict it on them. Let such persons remember the agony their own excoriated flesh occasions them, and correct such needless cruelty without another hour's delay, I implore.

The plucking of geese and other fowls, while alive, and the forcible removal of the infant calf and lamb from the parent, before the maternal affections have been satisfied; are deeds of pitiless cruelty, not sufficiently appreciated, even by the merciful inclined.

But it is in the slaughter-house and dissecting-room, that murder in its most appalling hideousness reigns supreme! I could occupy far more of your time than you, perhaps, can allow me, by a dreary recital of the atrocious deeds of cruelty, needlessly inflicted on these dumb servants of mankind, by their inhuman butchers, which have come to my knowledge, since our Society was chartered by the State.

Not a day passes—nay, scarce an hour of the day is numbered with the past—but that acts of fiendish barbarity are perpetrated on these defenseless creatures—acts, the refined ferocity of which might make demons shrink back with horror!

I have lately caused the arrest in New York of three of these monsters; one of them a late member of the Common Council of that city, himself a master butcher, who deliberately chopped off the two hind legs of a pair of steers in his back yard, and there let them lie in the scorching summer sun for hours before they were finally slaughtered! And wherefore, you may naturally inquire, was this infernal deed performed? Why, to use the language of the wretch himself—"Because they were unruly—we always do it!"⁵⁷ One word more, and I dismiss this barbarian from further consideration. When required to sign his name; he gave Ireland as the place of his nativity, and made his *cross*, not having yet learnt to write—a faculty of advanced civilization, it seems, not necessary to a member of that virtuous body of rulers and law-givers!

Not to dwell longer on this painful subject, let me apprise you of the fatal consequences resulting to the consumers of the flesh of animals, thus tortured out of their lives. The microscope has exposed to the eye, the fatal germs which afflict our bodies with, perhaps, half the diseases from which we suffer. Parasites are formed in the flesh of such animals, which are transferred to our own bodies; and although at first they are not larger than a grain of hemp-seed, they penetrate the muscular and other portions of the body, and produce in process of time the intestinal tape-worm. The milk, even, of the human mother, is thus also contaminated. Every physiologist knows the sudden and important results arising from the transfusion of blood: every nurse knows the almost immediate effect of her own food upon the sucking child; and every reflecting mind must perceive the direct influence which the meat of a panting, thirsting, fevered, agonized beast or fowl, must have on the system of those who feed on it.

There are inspectors of weights and measures; inspectors of timber and rum; appointed by authority; but, strange to say, there is not a single inspector of slaughter-houses or of animals destined for human food!

As with creatures which live on land, so is it with those inhabiting the water. A more positive error can not well be made, than to strive to keep fish alive after being captured. Turtles, lobsters, and scale-fish, as well as all others, should be instantly killed when taken, as every moment of captivity injuriously acts on the flavor of the food. To scrape off the scales of fish, to plunge them into boiling water, and cut them up while living, as many thoughtless and inhuman persons do, is simply a revolting cruelty.

I have thus far principally considered this subject in its mercenary and cruel aspects. I shall now invite your attention a short time longer, while I speak of it, more in detail, in a moral point of view.

It has been permitted to us by God, to take the lives of such animals as have been created for our food; and the necessities of civilization have demanded that many others should be sacrificed, to afford us clothing and other articles of usefulness. But this permission to kill is only granted to supply our *absolute wants*; and, to take the life of an innocent, unoffending animal, solely because we have the wish or power to do so, is an act of wanton wickedness, which, sooner or later, will bring upon us the punishment that inevitably awaits on sin.

The laws of self-defense also justify us in destroying those animals that would destroy us; that injure our properties or annoy our persons; but not even these, whenever their situation incapacitates them from hurting us. I know of no right which a sportsman has to shoot a bear on an inaccessible island of ice, or an eagle on the mountain-top, whose lives can not injure us, nor death procure us benefit.

We are unable to give life, therefore ought not wantonly to take it away from the meanest insect, without sufficient reason: they all receive it from the same benevolent hand as ourselves, and have an equal right to enjoy it.

The sufferings of the lower animals are really felt by them; in this they are not impostors like ourselves; we feign sickness and lameness—they never. These poor creatures look, tremble, and give forth the very indications of agony that we do—but they are always genuine. Theirs is the unequivocal physiognomy of pain. They put on the same aspect of terror when menaced with a blow, and exhibit the same distortions of agony after its infliction, that we do. The bruise, the burn, the fracture, and the deep incision, affects them similarly to ourselves; their blood circulates, and they have pulsations in various parts of their body, just as we have. They sicken and grow feeble with age, and finally die, just as we do. In their *affections*, too, the similitude is the same. The lioness, robbed of her whelps, causes the wilderness to ring with the proclamation of her wrongs; and the little bird, whose household has been stolen, saddens the grove with melodies of deepest pathos.

To the eye of the most unlearned, and general observer, all this is palpable; but when the scalpel of the physiologist lays open the secret recesses of their system—under which they shrink and are convulsed just as we are—there stands forth to view the same sentient apparatus, furnished with the same conductors for the transmission of feeling, to every pore upon the surface.

Yes, theirs is unmixed, unmitigated pain—the agonies of martyrdom, without the hopes and sentiments which religion inspires.

When they lay them down to die, their only fellowship is with suffering; for their bounded faculties deny them communion with other objects and interests. There is but room in their mysterious economy for one inmate, and that is the absorbing sense of their own single and concentrated anguish, without an articulate voice to give it utterance!

But we often hear it said, "They are only dumb, stupid beasts—why trouble ourselves about them, otherwise than to make use of them?" What profanity! Not trouble themselves about creatures which the Omnipotent Ruler of the world has seen fit to trouble himself with the creation of?

I wish you had the time and patience to hear all I could relate to you, touching the *intellectual* and *moral* characteristics of these "stupid beasts."

Ancient philosophers generally agreed that *brutes reason*, and of this opinion were Anaxagoras, Celsus, Galen, Plutarch and Plato.

Moreover, the learned of almost every age have not hesitated to accord to many animals, the power of communicating by *Language*. Certain it is that there exists a similitude of dialect, for they recognize one another by their voices, have sounds for anger, pain, joy, sorrow, and other passions. True, their idiom seems strange to us: so do the German, Greek, and Chinese languages, until we have learnt them.

Again, some persons are pleased to regard brutes as mere breathing machines, or *automata*, absolutely destitute of all reason, and pretend that their actions are only consequences of the exquisite mechanism of their bodies! Is the half-reasoning elephant only a machine? How is the *unreasoning* dog to distinguish a man from a hare or pheasant—how recognize its master? Is the admirable mechanism of the web, the bird's nest, the honey-comb, formed without reason?

History informs us, that the Emperor Domitian had a troop of elephants which were taught to dance to the sound of music, and that one of them that had been beaten for not being perfect in his lesson, was afterward seen in a field practicing it by himself!

But, say others, all this is mere *instinct*. Well, it matters little by what name such admirable intelligence is called; it bears too close a resemblance to the intellectual attributes of mankind, to abuse and torment them as is done.

Moreover, it is claimed by the most eminent philosophers of our race, that we owe to the brute creation the discovery of many medicines, and the invention of many arts. For example, it is the spider which taught man to spin; of the sparrow he learnt architecture; of the goose swimming; of the fish navigation, and of the silk-worm sewing.

Let it be remembered that the earth was first inhabited by the inferior animals, sent in advance, as it seems, to prepare the way for that paragon of creatures; man, and prompt his reason by their natural intelligence.

Then, as to another attribute of the poor despised brute—*sociality*. It is well known that that noble creature, the horse, will not quietly tolerate separation from his kind, but will leap any possible barrier of a field in order to get near one of his race. Oxen and cows, I am told, will not fatten by themselves; but neglect the finest pasture not recommended by the charm of *society*. And sheep flock together as naturally as do the particles of which the water of the ocean is composed. Even disparity of size, and incongruity of species form no impediment.

I have heard of a person whose whole stock consisted of a horse and one solitary hen. These twain spent most of their time in an orchard, where they saw no other creature than themselves. By degrees an apparent regard took place between them. The fowl would approach the quadruped with accents of complaisance, rub herself gently against his legs; and the horse, on his part, would manifest his attachment by moving about with the greatest circumspection, lest he should step upon his diminutive companion.

The *affections*, also, I repeat, are quite as deep seated in the brute as in the human creature. Let the violent bellowings of the poor cow attest this fact, when her calf is prematurely dragged from her.

Nor are these contemned creatures bereft of sympathy for one another, when in distress. A gentleman residing in a market town of England, had a valuable Newfoundland dog, which once preserved his life. The animal, which was called Rover, having run a thorn into his foot during the temporary absence of his master from home, the family had taken no further notice of it than to observe that it was lame. By the time his master returned, the poor creature's leg, as well as foot, were in a most inflamed state, and he could not

walk. Alarmed at his situation, he ordered his servant to carry him to the surgeon, who extracted the thorn and dressed the wound, and in a short time Rover was able to limp about tolerably well. His master, aware of his sagacity, turned him out at the time of the morning when he used to be carried, and the dog regularly went to the surgeon's, scratched at the door till admitted, and then walked into the doctor's office, where his foot was dressed as usual, until he was perfectly cured. Notwithstanding this, however, habit prompted him to continue his visits at the regular hour, when the surgeon used, good-humoredly, to take the foot in his hand and say, "Well, Rover, your foot is well now; you need not come any more." But, so long as some notice was taken of the foot, Rover thought it was professional service, and departed well satisfied; but, not understanding the words, he continued his visits for a fortnight longer. At length, one morning, the surgeon was surprised to find that he did not depart after the customary handling of the foot, but that he whined and fidgetted, making toward the door, then returning and staring the doctor in the face, and still whining and wagging his tail, till finding he was not understood, he took the doctor's coat-skirt in his teeth, and endeavored to pull him along. The doctor, concluding there was some reason for this, followed him to the door, against which Rover scratched—opened it, and lo! there stood another lame dog which Rover had brought with him, and which the servant had shut out, not considering him a companion of Rover's. The good natured doctor, from the whimsicality of the thing, performed what was necessary to his leg, and Rover and his friend went away, but returned regularly every day at the same hour, until the strange dog was cured.

Nor was this the only dog which he had to cure, for every lame or wounded canine creature, with which Rover became acquainted, he regularly accompanied to the doctor's, who, from humanity as well as the amusement of the thing, cured them all; until *gratitude*—yes, that's the word—attached them all to him, so that whenever any of them saw him, they were sure to follow him, sometimes three and even six together!

Now, as dogs generally run to the places where they see a number of their own species, strange dogs joined them; until at last the doctor became so well known to all the canine race in the town, that the moment he showed his face outside his door, his retinue began to attend him, increasing as he went along, until sometimes he had two or three dozen followers; so that, in the end, it became a nuisance, rendering him an object of observation and laughter, and he went by the name of the "Dog-Star."

But his humanity, as all good deeds do, brought its reward; he was the theme of conversation, his business increased, and Doctor Dog-star rose in his profession.

One shudders at the contemplation of the fearful barbarities inflicted on that generous and faithful servant—the horse; which, in return for the profit and pleasure he yields us, asks but a little fodder and water, and that necessary repose which will enable him to renew his toil.

Christian men and women, are not some of you that are present amenable to the charge of having greatly over-taxed his trembling limbs, whilst engaged in the giddy pursuit of pleasure or gain, and forgotten for the time that, like to your own, his flesh and bones and strength have limits to their endurance?

Sportsmen! you that train him under the influence of the wild screech and merciless lash, to snap asunder his throbbing sinews, in order to indulge a barren, senseless instinct of speed: have you ever paused to estimate at what cost to him, each second of time which you so needlessly covet the reduction of, is purchased by him?

Coachmen and teamsters, do you ever reflect on the rugged, slippery streets and highways over which you force his struggling footsteps; the crushing burdens with which you overload his yielding back; the midnight hours stolen from nature's lawful rest, until the outraged slave of avarice or folly stumbles, panting, to the ground, to be reanimated by your cruel scourge? Have you ever heeded the rebuking of your consciences, at sight of your prostrate and dying chattel upon the flinty street or highway—his eyes, perchance, reproachfully turned on you, his cruel master, until death, his only friend on earth, has sealed

his sightless orbits in oblivion? If you have, then let the retribution of that hour, melt your stern natures to dispensing unto these faithful drudges, a share of that justice which you so obstinately contend for from your fellow-men.

But I forget, I am trespassing too long on your patience, and must close this imperfect appeal.

The treatment of dumb animals, is a test and touchstone of character to a much greater degree than at first sight seems reasonable. Men who display ferocious instincts toward animals, will generally be found heartless in their dealings with their own species.

The Roman populace, in the degenerate days of the Empire, soon passed from the exhibitions of lions and panthers, tearing each other to pieces in the amphitheater; to gloat with an appetite which daily required a mightier sacrifice, over the mutual destruction of captives and slaves; until, at length, it was the select and favorite amusement of Roman ladies, to laugh over the death-throes of Christian bishops and saints!

Apart from all questions of policy and interest, the observance of mercy and kindness toward dumb animals is rich, in pure, indefinable satisfaction. It blesses not only the lower being which is the recipient of it, but doubly him who practices it. It hightens the animation of the breast. It is an humble, yet real imitation of the daily working of the Sovereign of the Universe; who hears the cry of the young raven; who teaches the airy insect to float on its transparent and many-colored wing; who fills the cup of nectar for the bee; and who for one providential arrangement which involves pain and suffering, manifests ten thousand which contribute to the enjoyment of His multitudinous creatures.

The annals of many a family, record instances of children rescued from drowning and wild beasts, by the energy, nay, almost human reason and love of their faithful dog.

That wandering son of the desert who treated his horse as if it had been his son; found, when he was a captive, that his faithful steed bore him by his teeth to a place of freedom and safety; and then died a willing martyr at his feet.

The despairing, fugitive has learnt a lesson of hope and perseverance from the spider he has fostered; and the prisoner has been cheered and sustained by the friendship of a mouse!

In conclusion, fellow-citizens, I pray you remember, that

"A man of kindness to his beast is kind,
But brutal actions show a brutal mind.
Remember, he who made thee made the brute,
Who gave thee speech and reason, formed him mute.
He can't complain—but God's all-seeing eye
Beholds thy cruelty—He hears his cry.
He was designed thy servant, not thy drudge,
And know that his Creator is thy Judge."

